



## South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



# 451ST WELCOMED HOME

Seven soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard's 451st Engineer Detachment (Firefighting Team) returned home last week after completing a one-year tour to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

A welcome home ceremony was held in their honor and nearly 200 family members and friends gathered at the Duke Corning Armory in Rapid City for their arrival.

The Sturgis-based 451st deployed in September 2011 and provided structural fire protection of bases in Marmal, Afghanistan. This was the unit's first deployment.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG, were featured speakers at the ceremony and commended the soldiers for a job well done.

"We're glad you're back, not only so you can come back to the way of life we're so lucky to have here in America, but because we know you're safe," said Daugaard. "Whether training Afghans or working with other firefighters from other states or other countries, we're very proud of what you did."

While deployed, the 451st responded to 21 emergency and non-emergency calls for aid, provided fire and life safety evaluations, assisted in a flood relief operation, trained with German forces and trained Afghan National Army soldiers on firefighting techniques.

"The South Dakota National Guard has a tremendous legacy that goes back over 150 years. Each of our units that go off carries that legacy with them," said Reisch. "The 451st has done its part to maintain and extend the legacy. Thank you for what you have done and welcome home."



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## PASSING THE TORCH

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Claims Office in Sioux Falls has named David Wells, the August *Employee of the Month*.

Dave's professionalism, devotion to duty, and strong moral values led to him being named the August 2012 Employee of the Month.

Passing the torch is Veterans Service Officer Tim Reisch (July Employee of the Month).

Wells has been with the Department since September of 2010.



## SD GUARD MEMBERS VOLUNTEER FOR DAY OF CARING

Sixteen South Dakota National Guardsmen joined about 1,400 other community members by volunteering their time to assist neighbors and businesses as part of the United Way of the Black Hills Day of Caring on Sept. 6.

The United Way of the Black Hills kicks off their fundraising campaign each year with a day in which community members and organizations provide their time on various projects around Rapid City. The United Way said this year's goal is \$1,945,000 and has 85 service projects throughout the city to complete.

Eight Soldiers from the 109th Regional Support Group and eight Soldiers from Joint Force Headquarters volunteered their time to spend the day painting, installing insulation and sheet-rock, and trimming trees at two separate locations.

"The Day of Caring is a way to give back to the community and to show our support," said Maj. Brendan Murphy, member of the Joint Force Headquarters team. "There are some people in the community who are in need and might not be financially or physically able to make some needed improvements to their home, so we're here to help them out and make a difference."

In addition to the manual labor provided during its Day of Caring, the United Way's primary mission is to raise money, and then distribute it to many of the area's leading non-profit agencies that provide help to people in need.

"I think it's important to give back and be thankful for what you have," said Murphy. "Not everyone has been given the same opportunities or abilities in life, and those of us that have been given a lot it's a great way we can show our support. We are a community and community means helping one another out."



# WALK FOR THE FALLEN

## Walk for the Fallen

[www.walkforthefallensiouxfalls.com](http://www.walkforthefallensiouxfalls.com)

Saturday, September 29  
8:00AM

Cost: FREE to All!

Veterans Memorial Park  
1021 W Bailey St.  
Sioux Falls, SD

*Participants are also invited to meet for a time of fellowship at a nearby restaurant afterwards (food is on your own).*

For more information, contact:  
Brad S. 605-376-9881

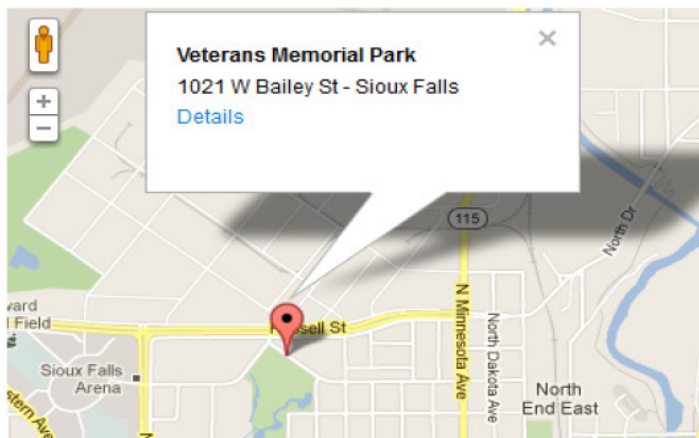


### Walk a mile for SD's fallen military heroes!

Join us as we walk a mile for every South Dakota service member who has died as a result of war, since September 11, 2001!

#### About the "Run for the Fallen" efforts:

Last year, there were roughly 7,000 participants in 32 states and two countries, running and walking a combined total of over 39,352 miles. Help us to continue to honor and remember our service members, bringing people and our community together, as we Walk for the Fallen!





## BLUE BUTTON REACHES ONE MILLION REGISTERED PATIENTS

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs has announced that, during the month of August, the one millionth patient has registered for Blue Button to access and download their Personal Health Record (PHR) information.

The Blue Button enables patients to assemble and download personal health information into a single, portable file that can be used inside a growing number of private health care electronic records—as well as those in the VA, Department of Defense, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and private sector partners. The VA Blue Button PHR includes prescription history, the ability to review past appointments and medical history details, wellness reminders and emergency contact information. Because it is web-based, the information is available anywhere, any time. Its security measures are identical to those employed by retail websites that accept credit cards.

For more information on the Blue Button initiative, please visit: <http://www.va.gov/bluebutton/>



## FIRESIDE CHATS

President Franklin D. Roosevelt was famous for his “fireside chats” during his tenure in the White House. His speeches broadcasted via radio, addressed such issues as banking, unemployment, status of the war and the economy.

Veterans at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home in Hot Springs didn’t deliver any speeches, but with a supply of graham crackers, marshmallows and chocolate, they had their own “fireside chats” around the firepit.

It was the veterans witching hour. They huddled with friends around the firepit taking turns telling tales. Some were eerie, some were true and some were too far fetched to believe or imagine!!!!

So the next time you visit the home, remember, they have some good stories to tell!!!!!!



## CINEMA FALLS TO AIR THE INVISIBLE WAR

Cinema Falls, a new place in Sioux Falls for cinezens (those who love the world of cinema) to screen films that are not available on demand, downloadable, or on a rentable DVD will be viewing the "Invisible War."

On Sunday, September 23, Cinema Falls at the Icon Lounge (402 N. Main), will air "The Invisible War." The film begins at 6:30 pm. Visit their website and Facebook pages for more information—

<http://cinemafalls.eventbrite.com/>

<http://cinemafalls.eventbrite.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/CinemaFalls/info>

*The Invisible War is a groundbreaking investigation into the epidemic of rape in the US Military. This film won the Documentary Audience Award at the Sundance Film Festival, rates a consistent 100% on Rotten Tomatoes, and has been praised by critics from every major media outlet. There will be a Q&A following the film with special guests Major General (Retired) Robert Bray, and a member of the SD SARC team. The Invisible War, by Oscar and Emmy-nominated director Kirby Dick and Emmy-nominated producer Amy Ziering, is a searing expose of the epidemic of rape of soldiers within the US military, the institutions that perpetuate and cover up its existence, and its profound personal and social consequences. Today, a female soldier in Iraq and Afghanistan is more likely to be raped than killed or injured by enemy fire. Every day American service women and men, who have pledged their lives to protect our country, are being raped and sexually assaulted. Not by the enemy, but by their fellow soldiers, commanders, and officers – by the people whose job it is to protect them. The Invisible War centers around the stories and experiences of Military Sexual Trauma survivors with the courage to come forward, tell their stories, and let us into their lives. The filmmakers strongly believe that The Invisible War will shed light on these egregious acts and the larger systemic issue. The intent of the film is not only to bring much needed attention to the experiences of these brave service members, but also to ignite public demand for legislation to protect the next generation from rape and sexual assault and the life long devastation that follows.*



## REMEMBERING OUR VETERANS

The Museum of Visual Materials in Sioux Falls is one of the oldest buildings in Sioux Falls and one of the greenest buildings in the state.

The Museum, located at 500 N. Main Avenue, is going to open the museum up for people in the Sioux Empire area to display their memories for others to share. Every two months the museum will have a new community display. Each display will have a unique theme where the community can show off their collections (whether it be veterans, exotic locations, Lego competitions, quilts, etc.

Starting November of 2012 they will have a two-month display in honor of veterans—"Remembering our Veterans. This display will proudly honor those who have fought for our freedom.

The museum is looking for any memorabilia besides explosives and firearms from the community. Those providing display items will receive your pieces back at the end of December. The museum would also like a description or write-up about what the piece is all about.

If you are interested in displaying your Veterans war memorabilia please contact Jeremy at [jeremy@sfmvm.com](mailto:jeremy@sfmvm.com) with the following information :

Name, email address, phone number, veterans name, items for display and war served.



## U.S. AMBASSADOR TO SURINAME REFLECTS ON SOUTH DAKOTA'S STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Ambassador John R. Nay, the 13th U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Suriname, is in his final days in the U.S. Embassy in Paramaribo, Suriname.

Ambassador Nay and his wife, Judith, will leave the South American country on Labor Day and head back to the United States where he will next serve as a diplomat in residence at the University of Illinois in Chicago and will travel to seven other universities in the region to promote Foreign Service as a career choice.

Since arriving in Suriname on Sept. 28, 2009, Ambassador Nay has contributed greatly to the success of the South Dakota National Guard's State Partnership Program with Suriname.

The National Guard's 65-nation State Partnership Program provides unique partnership capacity-building capabilities to combatant commanders through partnerships between U.S. states, territories, and the District of Columbia and foreign countries.

Senior leaders from the South Dakota National Guard were able to make a trip to Suriname in the Ambassador's final week in office to personally thank him for his service and dedication to the partnership throughout his tenure.





## VA MEDICAL FOSTER HOME PROJECT CERTIFIED AT VABHHCS

When living at home becomes difficult, most people would rather remain in a home-like setting than move to an assisted living center. In moments like this, the VA Medical Foster Home (MFH) program can help.

"Some veterans do not have anyone they can live with when they need a higher level of care," said Michelle Hough, MFH Coordinator at VA Black Hills Health Care System (VABHHCS). "For many, that has meant going into a facility. MFH offers them the option of staying in a home setting, with the care they need and deserve."

MFH provides an alternative to nursing home placement for a veteran who may be chronically or terminally ill with limited social support. The program begins when a private individual or couple decides they want to become caregivers, and take veterans into their home. The VA ensures the home and caregivers meet high standards through inspections, background checks, references and CPR and First Aid certifications.

Once the home and caregivers are approved, the MFH Coordinator will work with veterans and family members towards placement. This involves the veteran, and any family members, visiting the MFH and meeting the caregivers to ensure a good fit.

When a veteran is placed in a home, they are assisted through the VA Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) Program. This program provides a team of medical professionals who offer primary care in the home setting. The veteran pays the caregiver directly and the VA continues to provide the medical care and oversight.

The MFH program at VABHHCS was officially certified on Wednesday, August 29. There is currently one approved home in the Black Hills with two veterans placed. If you are interested in becoming a caregiver to a veteran in need, please contact Gary McClure at 605-745-2000 ext. 92325.



## NEW VSO AT GRANT COUNTY

Scott T. Malimanek has been named the County Veterans Service Officer at Grant County in Milbank.

Scott is originally from Albert Lea, MN. He and his wife Brenda moved to Milbank in 2006. Scott is a 20-year U.S. Navy veteran retiree.

His email address is [scott.malimanek@state.sd.us](mailto:scott.malimanek@state.sd.us).

Hours at the Grant County Veterans Service Office are as follows:

Mondays: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Tuesdays: 9:00 am to 1:30 pm

Wednesday: 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Thursday: 9:00 am to 1:00 pm



## STURGIS STAND DOWN

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs Black Hills Health Care System (VABHHCS) is hosting their first Women Veterans Stand Down on Wednesday, Sept. 26, from 2 – 6 p.m. at the Sturgis Armory at the Corner of Junction Avenue and Main Street in Sturgis, S.D.

The Women Veterans Stand Down, according to Dianna Monahan, Women Veterans Program Manager for VABHHCS, is intended to serve homeless and needy women veterans from the VA Black Hills catchment area. There is no charge for any of the services. "It is a hand up, rather than a hand out, extended by a caring community," said Monahan.

A Stand Down is an intensive service fair for veterans and their families, offering on the spot help.

VABHHCS staff will be available to hear issues, answer questions, and provide information on VA benefits, programs and health care enrollment opportunities. Staff will also provide clothing, meals, haircuts, gift certificates, information on health promotion and disease prevention, mental health referral and information, homeless assistance and vocational assistance to Stand Down participants.

Veterans who have not previously enrolled with the VA are requested to bring a copy of their military discharge papers, DD 214, to the Women Veterans Stand Down. For more information about the Women Veterans Stand Down, contact Dianna Monahan at 605-347-2511 ext. 97247.



## SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

The VA is committed to reducing Veteran suicide and offers a network of support for all veterans and their families and friends. Veterans in emotional crisis and their loved ones can call the free and confidential Veterans Crisis Line at **1-800-273-8255** and **Press 1**, chat online, or send a text message to **838255** to connect with a caring, qualified VA responder who can deal with any immediate crisis.

Each VA Medical Center has a Suicide Prevention Coordinator or team to offer veterans the services they need. When appropriate, Veterans Crisis Line responders can refer calls to Suicide Prevention Coordinators, who follow up with veterans and coordinate care for issues ranging from PTSD and depression to re-adjustment challenges and sleeping problems.

For more information about VA's suicide prevention and mental health resources, please visit [www.mentalhealth.va.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov).

**SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH**  
SEPTEMBER 2012



**STAND BY THEM**  
Help a Veteran

[Find out how](#)



# Upcoming Events

Sept. 14—Stand Down—Watertown

Sept. 21—Stand Down—Sioux Falls - VFW— 3601 S. Minnesota Ave. (9:00 am—3:00 pm)

Sept 21—POW MIA DAY

Sept. 22—SDNGEA Veterans March—Northern Black Hills

Sept. 25—Stand Down—Aberdeen Civic Center—203 S. Washington (2:00 pm—7:00 pm)

Sept. 25 Pierre Homeless Connect

Sept. 26—Women Veterans Stand Down—Sturgis Armory (Junction Ave /Main St) 2:00 pm—6:00 pm

Sept. 30—Gold Star Mothers Day

Oct. 19—SFVAHCS Women Veterans Conference—Sioux Falls Holiday Inn City Centre

## MAKING IT COUNT

Members of The American Legion Riders (ALR), Post 71, Chapter 7, present Randall Meyers, Director of Operations at the South Dakota Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home, with a \$3,000 check, to be used to furnish a room of the new complex and to create and help remodel a guest and visitor suite in Building 3. Funds were generated from the Annual Fall River Freedom Ride.



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